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ABSTRACT

The document contains the Texas state plan for the education of the gifted/talented and principles and criteria for local school district program development. The state plan includes a section on background, a position statement, the state definition of gifted/talented students, and a statement of goal and objective. Responsibilities and activities of the Texas Education Agency, Regional Education Service Centers, and Local School Districts are delineated. The section on program guidelines has sections on planning, identification, program organization, curriculum, staff development, parental/community involvement, and evaluation. Each section is organized into a general discussion, a checklist of action steps, and principles with associated criteria to assure compliance. Appended is additional information on the identification process, suggested criteria for selection of students, principles of a differentiated curriculum for the gifted/talented, criteria for the selection of materials for the gifted/talented, needs assessment for inservice in gifted/talented education, an inservice planning model and example, characteristics of teachers of the gifted/talented, and organizing a local association for the gifted/talented. Also included is a glossary of 15 terms such as psychomotor ability, differentiated curriculum, and student objectives. (DB)

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The Texas State Plan and Guidelines for The Education of the Gifted/Talented

Texas Education Agency · Austin, Texas

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Reviews of local education agencies pertaining to compliance with Title VI Civil Rights Act of 1964 and with specific requirements of the Modified Court Order, Civil Action No. 5281, Federal District Court, Eastern District of Texas, Tyler Division are conducted periodically by staff representatives of the Texas Education Agency. These reviews cover at least the following policies and practices:

(1) acceptance policies on student transfers from other school districts;

(2) operation of school bus routes or runs on a non-segregated basis;

(3) nondiscrimination in extracurricular activities and the use of school facilities;

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(6) nondiscriminatory practices relating to the use of a student's first language; and

(7) evidence of published procedures for hearing complaints and grievances.

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1981

This publication was prepared pursuant to a grant from the U.S. Office of Education, Department of Health, Education and Welfare. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Department of Education and no official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education should be inferred.

Foreword

Since 1975 the State Board of Education has included the education of the gifted/talented as one of its priority areas. The *Texas State Plan and Guidelines for the Education of the Gifted/Talented* is presented to assist districts in meeting the Board's goal of identifying and providing appropriate services for all gifted/talented students.

The plan is divided into two parts. The first section expresses the Texas Education Agency's commitment to the education of the gifted/talented and defines the roles of the Agency, the regional education service centers, and the local districts. The second part of the plan offers districts a set of comprehensive guidelines for planning and implementing exemplary programs.

I want to express my appreciation to the dedicated local district, education service center, and Agency staff who have assisted in the development of this plan. Their commitment to the education of gifted/talented students will make it possible for the public schools of Texas to plan and maintain programs that meet the needs of these special students.

Raymon L Bynum

Raymon L. Bynum
Commissioner of Education

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State Plan for the Education Of the Gifted/Talented

Introduction

The Texas State Plan and Guidelines for the Education of the Gifted/Talented is a revision of the plan adopted by the State Board of Education in 1975. The revised plan establishes a long-range goal and objective for statewide program development and outlines the responsibilities and activities of the agencies charged with program development. The plan also includes guidelines to assist school districts in planning, implementing, improving, and maintaining appropriate educational services for gifted/talented students.

The revised plan was developed pursuant to a 1979-80 grant award to the Texas Education Agency from the U.S. Office of Education. The revision was drafted by a steering committee composed of regional education service center (ESC), local district, and Agency staff. The members of this committee were:

William Davidson, ESC Region XIII
Henrietta Grooms, ESC Region VII
Evelyn Levsky Hiatt, Texas Education Agency
Dorothy Kirkpatrick, Port Arthur ISD
Walter Lazdowski, ESC Region XIX
Judith Martin, ESC Region XX
Jimmie Jean Owen, ESC Region XII
Anne Perry, Cypress-Fairbanks ISD
Ann Shaw, Texas Education Agency

Irving S. Sato, director of the National/State Leadership Training Institute on the Gifted and the Talented, served as consultant to the writing group.

The steering committee chose to combine in one document a state plan of action for gifted/talented education with guidelines that address the essential elements of sound program development. This approach was used because the writers believe that any instructions given to schools should be accompanied by information on how to accomplish those instructions.

The state plan gives direction to statewide gifted/talented program growth in Texas. The guidelines include principles and criteria for each of the program elements, and they should be viewed as standards to be attained by Texas schools during the 1980s.

The first draft of the plan was reviewed by educators in all parts of the state and by representative parents and local school board members. Many of their suggestions have been incorporated into the plan. Additionally, the plan was reviewed by the following nationally-recognized authorities in gifted/talented education:

Genelle Christensen, Idaho State Department of Education
Clifford Curl, Arkansas State Department of Education
James Fisher, formerly Maryland State Department of Education
Sandra Kaplan, National/State Leadership Training Institute on the Gifted and the Talented
Joseph Renzulli, University of Connecticut
James Turner, South Carolina State Department of Education

Throughout the state plan and guidelines, the terms "gifted" and "talented" are used synonymously. This usage results from the belief that "giftedness" encompasses high ability in many areas of human endeavor and is not just limited to extremely high intelligence.

Background

In 1975, the Texas State Board of Education approved a State Plan for the Education of the Gifted and Talented. This action signaled the first concerted effort by the state since the early 1960s to focus attention on the special needs of gifted/talented students. That same year, the 64th Texas Legislature passed legislation (Sec. 11.19, Texas Education Code) to establish pilot programs for gifted students, but appropriated no funds to support the programs. Also in 1975, the State Board included the education of the gifted/talented as one of its priority areas and has maintained it as a priority since that time.

In order to assess the status of educational services for gifted students in the mid-seventies, the commissioner of education asked for the identification of districts having programs for the gifted/talented in the 1974-75 Superintendent's Annual Report. Of the 1,130 school districts in Texas at that time, 262 (23%) districts reported having some kind of program for gifted/talented students. The 262 programs responding positively were then surveyed to determine the scope of the individual programs in relation to the definition of "gifted and talented" in the State Plan. This definition, based on the federal definition (Marland, 1972), was broader than earlier concepts of giftedness and delineated six areas of ability: (1) general intellectual ability, (2) specific academic aptitude, (3) creative or productive thinking, (4) leadership ability, (5) visual and performing arts, (6) psychomotor ability.

The majority of the respondents to the 1975 Texas survey reported having programs for gifted students that focused on academic ability, and most of their programs were built upon definitions of giftedness that were more restrictive than that of the State Plan. From the data available in 1975, it was concluded that a number of schools in Texas recognized and attempted to provide programs for their gifted students. It was also evident that a crucial need existed to expand both the number and scope of local school programs.

In 1976, the Agency established the Office of Gifted/Talented Education to increase awareness of this important area of education, to conduct a statewide staff development program, and to coordinate all efforts for the gifted/talented, including implementation of the State Plan. Two U.S. Office of Education grants, one in 1976-78 and another in 1978-79, provided funding for the Texas Regional Leadership Clusters Project and the Texas Regional Consortia Project. Together, these two projects were responsible for training over 700 professionals from both education service center and local district staff. While these projects were coordinated by the Texas Education Agency, they owe much of their success to the cooperation and dedication of the regional education service centers. Using a team approach, the ESCs replicated their training with local schools, which resulted in increasing momentum and a strong underpinning for gifted education across the state.

During the period of training activities, public interest increased and by 1978 a steering committee of concerned parents had met and organized the Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented (TAGT). This state organization, with membership composed of parents, educators, and other lay citizens, was established to promote and improve the education of all gifted/talented persons and to disseminate information about their needs.

In 1979, new state legislation replaced the earlier statute, and the 66th Texas Legislature appropriated $5 million for the 1980-81 biennium to establish exemplary public school programs for gifted/talented students. Such programs must be planned to address one or more of four areas of ability: general intellectual ability, specific subject matter aptitude, ability in creative and productive thinking, and leadership ability.

According to the legislation (Secs. 16.501 and 16.502, Texas Education Code), foundation school funds are distributed to single districts or cooperatives on a formula basis of $150 per pupil served, up to five percent of the total average daily attendance (ADA) for the grade levels included in the program. The funds are excess-cost funds, intended to supplement local funds and not to supplant them. To receive the state funds, programs must serve at least 20 students, and no program may be awarded more than $100,000.

Applications outlining program plans are submitted to the Agency for evaluation and approval for funding. In making funding decisions, the Agency is also required to select programs for funding that are representative of various types of program alternatives, various sizes of districts, and various geographical areas of the state.

Up to 10 percent of the state funds designated for gifted/talented programs may be used for administration of the program and for statewide technical assistance and staff development. Since the advent of state funding in 1979, administrative monies have been shared between the Agency and the regional education service centers in a coordinated effort to strengthen technical assistance and staff development for all districts interested in planning and implementing programs for the gifted.

An important force in encouraging schools to develop appropriate services for the gifted was the recommendation of the Governor's Advisory Committee on Education. The committee, established in 1979 by Governor William P. Clements, Jr., to explore salient issues in public elementary and secondary education in Texas, noted in the *Report and Recommendations* (June 1980) that:

> Gifted and talented students have unique needs that should be addressed by public schools. These students have potential to make special contributions to future society. Many school districts provide effective programs, yet there are a significant number of the approximately 150,000 such students in Texas who are not served by programs (pp. 6-7).

Consequently, the committee recommended that local district boards "provide special programs for all gifted and talented students" (p. 7).

As we enter a new decade, public interest in the education of Texas' most able youth is rapidly spreading. In response to this public interest, as well as their own concern for meeting the needs of gifted students, a growing number of Texas schools are seeking assistance from the Texas Education Agency in developing appropriate services for the gifted. The need for a planning guide for Texas schools has become increasingly apparent. To meet this need, this comprehensive state plan has been developed.

Position Statement

A respect for excellence is the very heart of a civilized society. Universities, museums, libraries, theaters, and sports arenas attest to this country's devotion to the recognition and display of our finest works. These finished products, however, can only be the result of determined effort by individuals committed to excellence. This dedication to excellence, coupled with the potential to achieve it, must be recognized, nourished, and reinforced by the public schools.

Commitment to the future demands fostering and developing the abilities of gifted/talented youth. To deny such students opportunities is to deny excellence. Just as a sports coach works to strengthen and discipline the abilities of a superior young athlete, so must the classroom teacher strengthen and discipline the abilities of a superior student.

While gifted/talented students may master the basic skills more readily than other students at their grade level, without assistance or enriching experiences, these same students may become underachievers or behavior problems. In some cases, gifted students fail to develop their exceptional abilities because they lack the encouragement to do so.

In the *Principles, Standards, and Procedures for the Accreditation of School Districts* (Texas Education Agency, 1979), we are reminded that:

> Every precaution should be taken to ensure that students and teachers do not perceive satisfactory performance in these essential learning areas as *all* that a student should strive to attain through his/her school experience. Certainly every student should be assisted and encouraged to go as far beyond these essential learning objectives as his/her abilities, interests, and life goals will permit (p. 22).

Because of their exceptional abilities, gifted/talented students can progress far beyond the regular school curriculum. By providing experiences that are consistent with the abilities or potential of the gifted child, the education of all children will be improved. Director of the National/State Leadership Training Institute on the Gifted and the Talented, Irving S. Sato (March 1980), has explained this concept in this way:

> Although some educational needs of gifted students are being addressed in general education, certain needs unique to the gifted are being largely ignored. These distinctive educational needs make the gifted markedly different from students of other abilities. Any quality program for the gifted rests on a thorough understanding of these differences. As we modify the curriculum for the gifted in response to these differences, we actually upgrade education for all students since many practices for the gifted are in lesser degree appropriate and helpful for other pupils.

While the responsibility of program development for gifted/talented students rests with the local districts, the State Board of Education and the Texas Education Agency actively support their efforts. The State Board includes education of the gifted/talented as one of its priority areas and urges the early identification of gifted students and the subsequent implementation of programs that are suited to their special needs.

If we are to have inquiring scientists, dedicated craftsmen and artists, and inventive problem solvers in the future, we must not fail now in educating appropriately those children and youth most likely to achieve excellence. Our obligation to the future requires a strengthened commitment to gifted/talented education today.

State Definition of Gifted/Talented Students

The following Texas state definition of gifted/talented students is offered in an attempt to assist school districts in their efforts to identify these students:

> Gifted and talented students are those who excel consistently or who show the potential to excel in any one or combination of the following areas: general intellectual ability, specific subject matter aptitude, creative and productive thinking ability, leadership ability, ability in the visual and performing arts, and psychomotor ability. These students require educational experiences beyond those normally provided by the regular school program.

This definition, broader than traditional concepts of giftedness, is presented in the belief that potential or high ability in any area valued by our culture must be recognized and nurtured, both for the good of the individuals concerned as well as for their possible contributions to our society.

According to an in-depth report on the education of the gifted/talented in the United States (Marland, 1972), a conservative estimate of the number of gifted students is three to five percent of our public school population. This study emphasizes that there is ample evidence that gifted/talented students are found in all ethnic and economic groups and that they can be identified in all groups within our society. The report further states, "Since the full range of human talents is represented in all races of man and in all socio-economic levels, it is unjust and unproductive to allow social or racial background to affect the treatment of an individual" (p. 19). Gifted/talented children representative of all population groups, if identified and served now, will be instrumental in assuring the future well-being of all segments of society.

State Goal, Objective, Responsibilities and Activities

Texas has long been committed to the ideas of encouraging the best that is possible for each child. In the *Goals for Public School Education in Texas* (Texas Education Agency, November 1979), this point is emphasized with these words: "To develop and educate each student according to his or her potential is the underlying philosophy clearly defined in the text of the Goals" (p. 1).

Goal

In accepting this responsibility, the Texas Education Agency establishes the following long-range, state goal for gifted/talented education:

> To identify all gifted/talented students in grades K-12 and to provide educational experiences and/or services appropriate to their unique needs.

Objective

In keeping with the state goal and to assure progress toward its achievement, the Agency sets the following objective for Texas public schools in the 1980s.

> By 1986, school districts in Texas will have implemented, individually or cooperatively, planned programs that serve at least 50% of the gifted/talented students in the state.

Responsibilities and Activities

Although a combined effort of the Agency, the 20 regional education service centers, and local school districts will be necessary to achieve this objective, the primary responsibility for education of the gifted rests with the local district. It is in the local school district, through local support and local commitment, that the real effort to meet the needs of gifted/talented students takes place. As stressed in the *Report and Recommendations* of the Governor's Advisory Committee on Education (June 1980), school district boards should provide special programs for all gifted/talented students. However, it is important that local schools feel confident that they may rely on both the Agency and the service centers to provide leadership, consultative assistance, and training so that the long-range objective can be reached. By working together in cooperation with parents and community, the agencies involved can assure that appropriate educational experiences are enjoyed by an increasing number of Texas' gifted and talented youth as the decade proceeds.

To give direction to this cooperative effort in the Eighties, the responsibilities and activities of the Agency, the ESCs, and the local districts are outlined below. Action steps for the local school districts are also included in each section of the guidelines that accompany the state plan.

Texas Education Agency

To assist school districts in achieving the objective for gifted/talented education, the Texas Education Agency will:

1. Administer a state program and implement any state or federal legislation designed to provide educational opportunities for gifted/talented students.
2. Increase and maintain public awareness of the needs of gifted students and the necessity of school programs and other services to meet those needs.
3. Serve as a source of information on the education of the gifted/talented.
4. Develop and periodically update a state plan for the education of the gifted/talented to guide school districts in establishing local programs.
5. Coordinate technical assistance and staff development activities with the regional education service centers.
6. Coordinate the efforts of the Agency and other state, federal, local, and private agencies, institutions of higher learning, and professional organizations in planning and developing program alternatives for gifted students.
7. Develop and periodically update criteria for the identification of gifted/talented students and seek ways to improve identification procedures.
8. Develop guidelines and other resource materials for school districts to use in planning or improving programs that are appropriate to the special needs of the gifted.
9. Provide staff development opportunities for selected personnel from school districts, regional education service centers, and the Agency to strengthen their competencies in planning and implementing programs for gifted/talented students.
10. Cooperate with institutions of higher learning in planning undergraduate and graduate training programs for teachers of the gifted.
11. Identify exemplary programs for the gifted/talented that can serve as models to guide school districts in developing programs for the gifted.
12. Encourage the development of instructional materials that meet the unique needs of gifted students.
13. Work with any committees or advisory groups that may be appointed by the commissioner of education.
14. Compile and disseminate evaluation reports on the status of gifted/talented education in the state.
15. Seek additional resources to support exemplary programs in districts not yet served at the current level of state funding.

Regional Education Service Centers

To assist school districts in planning, implementing, and improving programs for gifted/talented students, the regional education service centers will:

1. Designate one or more staff members to be responsible for coordinating and providing services in gifted/talented education.
2. Develop an annual plan of action for the delivery of services in gifted/talented education and submit a report of these services to the Texas Education Agency.
3. Provide information on program development and other aspects of gifted/talented education to schools and other agencies and individuals within the region.
4. Provide consultative assistance to districts in developing long-range plans for the education of the gifted/talented.
5. Provide technical assistance to schools in the various elements of program planning and implementation such as identification of students, program organization, curriculum and teaching strategies, instructional materials, inservice, parental/community involvement, and evaluation.
6. Assist districts in applying the state plan and guidelines and in preparing applications for state funding.
7. Assess the staff development needs of districts within the region in gifted/talented education and share this information with the Texas Education Agency.
8. Conduct staff development activities in gifted/talented education for local school personnel based on the identified needs of the districts within the region.
9. Provide consultative assistance to schools and institutions of higher education in planning preservice and inservice education programs.
10. Conduct on-site visits to state-funded programs to assist them in improving their services to gifted students.
11. Participate in meetings conducted by the Agency to design ways to strengthen gifted/talented education on a statewide basis.
12. Participate in statewide staff development programs conducted by the Agency.
13. Make presentations to schools, professional organizations, and other agencies or groups to build understanding of the needs of gifted students.

Local School Districts

To plan and implement an exemplary program for the gifted/talented, local districts will:

1. Conduct an assessment of district needs in gifted/talented education and survey district resources.
2. Appoint a planning committee of administrators, teachers, support personnel, and parent/community representatives to plan the program.
3. Review the state plan, gifted/talented literature, and exemplary programs.
4. Attend awareness sessions and workshops on gifted/talented education.
5. Determine the scope (grade levels, areas of giftedness, program organization) of the program.
6. Develop the district's long-range plan for the education of the gifted/talented with specific plans for first-year implementation and secure local board approval of both.
7. Conduct awareness sessions for total school staff and community.
8. Develop identification procedures and criteria and select students for the program.
9. Name a coordinator, select teachers for the program, and define the role of other school staff.
10. Provide orientation for parents of students selected.
11. Conduct training for teachers of the gifted/talented prior to program implementation as well as an ongoing inservice program during the school year.
12. Develop student objectives and curriculum and select materials for the program.
13. Finalize program evaluation plans.
14. Provide a minimum of 150 minutes per week of appropriate instruction for the gifted/talented students.
15. Plan strategies to involve parents and community members in implementation of the program.
16. Disseminate information about the program and maintain a plan for ongoing acceptance of the program by the total school staff and community.
17. Evaluate both the program objectives and the student objectives, and report evaluation findings to key groups.
18. Refine program plans on the basis of evaluation results.
19. Repeat the planning process as necessary to refine and/or expand the program.

Guidelines for Gifted/Talented Programs: Principles and Criteria For Program Development

The planning and development of a gifted/talented program must be based on factors that exist within the school district integrated with those factors that are ideal for the students. The program must reinforce and be compatible with other programs in the district, yet must be designed to meet the special needs of the gifted. It is difficult to meet these needs within the regular curriculum, which must keep pace with the majority of students rather than with those of special abilities. A program for the gifted is one that strengthens, develops, and expands the talents and abilities in which students excel or have the potential to excel. These guidelines are designed to assist districts in planning strong, defensible programs for the gifted.

There are seven sections in the guidelines: planning, identification, program organization, curriculum development, staff development, parental/community involvement, and evaluation. The sections represent key elements of effective programming for the gifted. Each section is divided into three parts: an *overview, action steps,* and *principles and criteria.*

The *overview* is a brief introductory discussion of the essential element under review. The *action steps* provide a checklist for local districts to use in assessing the progress of their programs; the steps are listed in chronological order and may need to be adjusted to local conditions. They are to be completed during one of three phases of program development:

Phase I: Planning the program, beginning six to twelve months prior to implementation

Phase II: Implementation of the program

Phase III: Refinement and expansion of the program

The appropriate phase is indicated to the right of each action step.

The final part of each section is composed of *principles and criteria.* The *principles* provide broad directions to local schools and focus attention on the crucial standards necessary to attain an exemplary program. *Criteria* are essential components of a principle and highlight selected features of the principle that should not be overlooked.

The more knowledgeable school personnel are of the theories of sound programming for the gifted and talented, the better the chances for high student performance. More important, by implementing a well-planned gifted/talented program that follows state guidelines, a district assures that appropriate educational experiences will be available to all its students and that its staff is committed to assisting and encouraging all students to reach their maximum potential.

Planning

Careful planning is required if programs for gifted/talented students are to be successful. Planning for a program usually begins at least six months to one year prior to implementation. To do the planning, a committee composed of school district personnel and interested parents and community members is established and charged with developing a long-range plan for the education of the gifted/talented in the district. Cooperation among the parents, school, and the community is suggested at this early stage to:

- develop understanding of and support for gifted/talented education
- provide smooth implementation of a new program
- provide gifted/talented students with advanced learning experiences in many areas in and outside the school.

The district's long-range plan provides a framework for developing K-12 services for the gifted/talented students of the district and serves as a checklist on progress in program implementation. Local board approval of the plan demonstrates district commitment to the education of the gifted/talented. The plan combines current research in gifted education with the philosophy and needs of the district with regard to its gifted population. The plan also includes a district definition of its gifted student population and program goals and objectives that are compatible with the district's general philosophy of education.

The role of the planning committee does not always end once local board approval of the district plan and financing of the program have been secured. Often, members of the planning committee serve on the identification committee or on a district advisory council for the education of its gifted/talented youth.

The planning phase includes providing awareness information to all school staff, parents, and community. Information regarding the program's purpose and plans for implementation is disseminated through newspaper articles and other media, PTA meetings, community group meetings, faculty meetings, and inservice workshops.

Action Steps for Planning

Checklist

		Phase
_____	1. Recognize the need for special services for gifted/talented students.	I
_____	2. Establish a planning committee of educators, parents, and interested community members. (Later this group can serve as an advisory council to the program and district.)	I
_____	3. Conduct needs assessment to identify district needs in gifted/talented education.	I
_____	4. Attend awareness sessions and workshops, review state plan and guidelines for gifted/talented education, survey current research/literature (see Reference and Selected Bibliography), and visit exemplary programs.	I
_____	5. Develop district's long-range (3- to 5-year) plan that includes the following elements:	I
	• Philosophy or position statement	
	• Needs assessment statement	
	• District definition of gifted/talented students with area(s) of giftedness to be served	
	• Program goals and objectives for indentification, program organization, curriculum, staff development, parental/community involvement, and evaluation	
	• Plan of action with activities, responsibilities, timelines, and evidences of achievement for accomplishing the objectives	
	• Budgetary considerations/projections	
	• Appendices, if applicable.	
_____	6. Secure local board approval of long-range plan with specific first-year implementation plan.	I
_____	7. Identify person(s) responsible for coordinating the program.	I
_____	8. Provide awareness level sessions and written information to school, parents, and community.	I

Principles and Criteria of Planning

PRINCIPLE I: Gifted/talented programs are based on the needs of the school district and on current research in the field.

Criteria

1.1 A committee composed of local district personnel, parents, and community members is named to develop a plan for the education of the gifted/talented in the district.

1.2 The planning committee conducts a needs assessment and analyzes the findings on gifted/talented education in the district.

1.3 Planning committee members attend awareness workshops, review the state plan and guidelines, survey current literature, and visit gifted/talented programs in other districts.

PRINCIPLE II: The planning committee develops a long-range plan for the education of the gifted/talented in the district to submit to the local board for its approval.

Criteria

2.1 Using their research and needs assessment results, the planning committee develops a position statement, a needs assessment statement, and a local definition of gifted/talented students that are compatible with the local district's philosophy of education.

2.2 The planning committee establishes program goals and objectives with activities, responsibilities, timelines, and evidences of achievement for the following program areas:

- identification
- program organization
- curriculum
- staff development
- parental/community development
- evaluation

2.3 The planning committee provides information on the gifted/talented program to all school staff, parents, and the community.

2.4 The planning committee develops a first-year implementation plan and budget for approval by the local board.

Identification

The purpose of identification is to determine who the gifted/talented students are and what measures should be used to identify them. To do this, the planning committee first reviews the district's definition of giftedness as well as the results of any general surveys of students' abilities and then decides on the area(s) of giftedness to be served.

The identification process is comprehensive, consisting of two distinct steps: (1) nomination and screening, (2) selection. The process should be planned and coordinated by a committee of professionally competent persons, and students must be selected on the basis of multiple and specific criteria consistent with the area(s) of giftedness addressed by the program. Some students may be gifted in more than one area. (Details of the identification process are explained in Appendix A of this plan.)

Several factors should be considered when planning the identification process:

1. There is no single method or instrument that adequately identifies giftedness or talent in an area of human endeavor because giftedness is a multi-faceted trait.

2. The abilities required to excel in one area of endeavor are not exactly the same as those required to excel in another, though commonalities do exist. Therefore, it is essential to know what type of giftedness will be addressed in the program before the identification process can begin.

3. Under certain conditions, subjective information about students may be a more appropriate basis for identification than objective information. It may be necessary to obtain the opinion of experts when subjective data such as student products and auditions are used as identification criteria.

4. Consideration must be given to the following groups who may otherwise be overlooked:

   - racial, ethnic, or minority group students
   - culturally different or economically disadvantaged students
   - handicapped students
   - students who experience sex bias and stereotyping
   - students who display various types of classroom behavior such as disruptiveness, extreme shyness, excessively high energy level, continuous questioning, intense anxiety, and short attention span.

5. No single criterion, such as an IQ score, teacher nomination, or grades, can be the determining factor for selection of students to participate in the program or services. Although grades often indicate high achievement, some students who excel in various areas receive poor grades throughout their school lives. It is imperative, therefore, to recognize that grades received by some students are not always indicative of their true abilities or potential. Similarly, no single method or instrument should be used to remove a student once identified as gifted from the program to which he has been assigned.

Action Steps for Identification

Checklist

_____	1. Review current research and state guidelines on identification.	I
_____	2. Select identification committee composed of professionally qualified individuals.	I
_____	3. Review methods that most accurately and fairly measure the area(s) of giftedness to be addressed by the program.	I
_____	4. Select at least five criteria, including both objective and subjective measures, that will be used to screen and select students for the program. Develop an identification matrix if one is to be used.	I
_____	5. Develop district identification procedures with entry, exit, and transfer policies.	I
_____	6. Provide staff development on the characteristics of gifted/talented students and identification measures to both program and regular classroom teachers and solicit nominations of students.	II
_____	7. Inform the community of the program and solicit nominations from them.	II
_____	8. Inform parents of their child's nominations and secure permission for any special testing.	II
_____	9. Screen students who have been nominated.	II
_____	10. Review each nominated student's file or matrix and select the students for the program.	II
_____	11. Inform parents of identification results and obtain their permission for students to participate in the program.	II
_____	12. Inform school staff of students selected for the program.	II
_____	13. Provide upon request individual guidance and counseling on identification procedures and results to parents and students.	II
_____	14. Conduct awareness level sessions for the selected students and their parents.	II
_____	15. Evaluate identification procedures.	II
_____	16. Revise identification procedures, based on evaluation results to allow for program improvement and growth.	III

Principles and Criteria of Identification

PRINCIPLE I: The district definition of gifted/talented students and the identification process are established in writing prior to the screening of students for the program.

Criteria

1.1 Identification is based upon a local district definition of gifted/talented that is compatible with national and state definitions.

1.2 Identification procedures evolve from the philosophy, goals, and objectives of the local district's plan and clearly reflect the intent of the program.

1.3 The identification process is planned and conducted by a committee of professional educators involved in the program with the cooperation of parents and other community resource persons.

1.4 Identification procedures are clearly outlined, available, and explained to all concerned. They are the responsibility of the professional staff.

1.5 Final selection for placement in a program is made by a committee composed of at least three persons—an administrator, a teacher, and a psychologist, diagnostician, or counselor—who are knowledgeable of the needs and potential of gifted/talented students and familiar with the state guidelines. If no counselor or diagnostician is available, another individual familiar with psychometrics is included.

1.6 Identification procedures and instruments are selected according to validity, reliability, and cost effectiveness.

PRINCIPLE II: Identification is based upon multiple and specific criteria and upon both objective and subjective information.

Criteria

2.1 A variety of methods/criteria is used to insure fairness and accuracy because no single method of identification or criterion for selection is sufficient to identify all gifted students.

2.2 Identification procedures are appropriate for and consistent with the areas of giftedness served.

2.3 At least five specific criteria are used for each area of giftedness addressed by the program. They are not limited to standardized test scores. The criteria for selecting may include the following:

- standardized test scores: general ability
- standardized test scores: achievement

- standardized test scores: specific aptitude/ability
- individually-administered test of ability
- criterion-referenced test scores
- cumulative records
- nominations and/or ratings by educators, parents, peers, others
- student products
- outstanding performance within the school, home, or community
- other pertinent evidence.

(Refer to Appendix B.)

2.4 Written permission of parents is secured for special testing if needed for screening or selection.

2.5 Students selected for programs or services usually qualify in the top five percent of the local school population on three of the five criteria used for selection.

2.6 Participation in any program or service offered for gifted/talented students is voluntary on the part of the students and requires written permission of their parents or legal guardians.

PRINCIPLE III: The identification process is ongoing and contains provisions for the transfer of students and for possible errors in identification.

Criteria

3.1 Identification is ongoing to allow for any changes in the factors considered for selection or for the arrival of students not enrolled during the screening process and is a joint responsibility of all professional staff.

3.2 Provisions for transfer students from outside or within the district are prepared prior to implementation of the identification process.

3.3 Provisions for errors in identification are prepared prior to implementation of the identification process.

3.4 Provisions are made for staff and parents to appeal identification decisions.

3.5 The program administrator makes final decisions regarding exiting of students from the program for educational, psychological, and personal reasons after consultation with both student and parents. Such decisions are based on the following data:

- teacher recommendations based on observation of student behavior, performance, and products
- counselor recommendations based on interviews and observations
- parental requests for withdrawal from the program or services
- student requests for withdrawal from the program or services with parental permission.

Program Organization

The philosophy and framework of a gifted/talented program are an outgrowth of and consistent with other programs in the district. This must be kept in mind despite the fact that gifted/talented programs often rely on organizational or administrative patterns that are markedly different from those used in other district programs.

Selection of appropriate organizational patterns, frequently called program prototypes, is an essential part of gifted/talented program planning. Program prototypes for the gifted/talented include three basic elements of enrichment: grouping, acceleration, and guidance. Most programs are composed of some combination of these elements. Sandra Kaplan (1974) notes, "Each prototype should be reviewed in relationship to how it can be molded or varied to the advantage of the students and the program" (p. 45). There also must be enough flexibility within the program design so that changes can be made to address student needs more effectively.

The goals and student objectives of each program guide the choice of prototype. In any one district, several different prototypes may be developed for different sites or grade level ranges. However, attention should be given to providing gifted/talented students with a scope and sequence of activities that will be consistent throughout the district. When determining the program prototype, it is important to consider the fiscal responsibility of the district. District personnel should realize that local support, despite some state or federal grants, is the primary and major source of funding. Also to be considered in deciding upon the prototype are staff strengths, available facilities, time constraints, and other unique local conditions.

Action Steps for Developing the Program Prototype

Checklist

		Phase
_____	1. Review literature on program prototypes for the gifted/talented.	I
_____	2. Study existing special programs in the school that already serve students with high abilities.	I
_____	3. Survey existing programs for other special populations in the school for scheduling, staffing, and funding trends.	I
_____	4. Explore and visit program models in other schools.	I
_____	5. Consider funding, staffing, and physical constraints.	I
_____	6. Develop or adapt a program prototype that complements program goals.	II
_____	7. Evaluate success of prototype in helping meet program goals and objectives and modify if necessary.	III

Principles and Criteria of Program Organization

PRINCIPLE I: The program prototype developed to serve gifted/talented students is compatible with the district's philosophy, goals, and objectives.

Criteria

1.1 The prototype selected accommodates the unique needs of the gifted served.

1.2 The prototype selected depends upon (a) the degree to which the organizational pattern accommodates the overall goals of the district and (b) the degree to which it accommodates the goals and objectives developed for the program.

PRINCIPLE II: The program prototype incorporates basic organizational considerations into a setting that promotes differentiated learning experiences for gifted/talented students.

Criteria

2.1 Considerations essential in designing an effective program prototype are:

- student needs and number of students affected
- program goals, objectives, and learning expectancies
- movement patterns required for students
- personnel (experiences, strengths, and training)
- communication channels
- record-keeping procedures.

2.2 The program prototype selected is based on the unique learning needs of gifted students and is some form, or combination of form, of enrichment demonstrated through special grouping, acceleration, and/or guidance.

a. *Enrichment:* Experiences that expand, supplant, or extend learning.

b. *Grouping:* Methods by which students are brought together to provide appropriately different learning opportunities.

Example: cluster grouping

c. *Acceleration:* Activities that promote learning beyond the regularly prescribed curriculum by varying the pace of instruction in content and/or process.

Example: advanced placement

d. *Guidance:* Planned, directed experiences that promote (1) understanding of the self in relationship to one's abilities and (2) understanding of one's relationship with others.

Example: mentorships

2.3 The program prototype selected makes maximum use of the budgetary commitment of the supporting district and of other resources.

2.4 A local board policy is developed for secondary students to receive credit by examination for approved correspondence courses and for courses taken on college and university campuses.

2.5 Evaluation of the effectiveness of the program prototype is ongoing, and the resulting data are used in making decisions regarding changes in the program organization.

Curriculum

Curriculum provides the substance for educational programs. It is a plan of instruction that includes the content to be learned, the processes to facilitate the learning, and the products that result from the learning. Sandra Kaplan (1974), noted authority on curriculum development for the gifted, states that curriculum is "a method for organizing teaching/learning activities to effect specific cognitive and affective growth" (p. 93).

Because gifted/talented students possess characteristics and needs that make them different from other students, their curriculum must be differentiated from that of other students. Curriculum for the gifted is marked by features that distinguish it from the regular curriculum; it involves the use of course content, methods, and materials beyond those practical or essential for other students (see Appendix C).

Differentiation for the gifted also implies modification of student goals and objectives, instructional strategies, learning experiences, evaluation, and scope and sequence of the curriculum to meet their individual needs and interests. Kaplan (1974) reminds us that:

> The curriculum is not intended to be a prescribed route which all students must follow. It should be considered a framework of learning alternatives serving as a resource for ideas or as a departure point for further study and activity. Neither the student nor the teacher should be expected to use it in its entirety or in one specific sequence (p. 33).

Action Steps for Curriculum Development

Checklist

		Phase
_____ 1.	Review state plan and guidelines, district's philosophy of gifted/talented education, program goals, and student objectives.	I
_____ 2.	Select staff (see Appendix G).	I
_____ 3.	Review literature on differentiated curriculum, learning theory and models, teaching strategies, and learning activities appropriate for the gifted.	I
_____ 4.	Assess students' interests, skills, and needs.	I
_____ 5.	Select curriculum models, teaching strategies, and student objectives and activities.	I
_____ 6.	Use established criteria to select instructional materials.	I
_____ 7.	Implement the differentiated curriculum.	II
_____ 8.	Obtain the services of school staff, parents, and community members as mentors and to provide ideas for curriculum.	II
_____ 9.	Schedule time and provide resources for teachers of the gifted to work together to develop or adjust the curriculum and to plan cooperatively with regular classroom teachers.	III
_____ 10.	Evaluate achievement of student objectives.	III
_____ 11.	Refine and expand existing curriculum.	III
_____ 12.	Develop new curriculum and develop or refine scope and sequence of curriculum across grade levels and schools.	III

Principles and Criteria of Curriculum

PRINCIPLE I: The curriculum for gifted/talented students is differentiated from the curriculum of other students because the characteristics and needs of gifted students are markedly different from other students.

Criteria

1.1 Curriculum complements the program prototype selected and has strong theoretical foundations.

1.2 Curriculum for the gifted extends, reinforces, and/or replaces the regular curriculum.

1.3 The program goals and student objectives determine how the curriculum will be differentiated for individual and/or groups of gifted learners and will produce measurable outcomes.

1.4 Curriculum planners consider these ways of differentiating:

- accelerated or advanced content in both cognitive and affective areas
- greater degree of complexity of content
- introduction of content beyond the prescribed curriculum
- student-selected content according to interest coupled with provisions for intensive independent study
- working with abstract concepts in a content area
- working with resources beyond those designated for use with the regular curriculum
- increased time for learning in order to pursue topics more extensively.

1.5 Curriculum has scope and sequence to avoid fragmentation and isolation of learning experiences and to attain continuity and articulation.

1.6 Release time and resources are provided for curriculum development and time is provided for regular classroom teachers and teachers of the gifted to coordinate their instructions.

1.7 Evaluation of the curriculum's effectiveness is ongoing, and evaluation data are used in making decisions regarding changes in planning and implementing the curriculum.

PRINCIPLE II: Curriculum for gifted/talented students includes the choice and elaboration of content and processes to insure differentiation.

Criteria

2.1 Differentiated content is achieved by encouraging students to move beyond merely factual information toward broader concepts and generalizations.

Example: Using broad concepts or generalizations

Elementary grade topic: Insects

Regular curriculum activity: Studying the parts of an insect

Differentiated activity for the gifted: Study of the ecological balance of insects and the environment

2.2 Differentiated content is achieved *vertically* by acceleration of knowledge and/or skills which correlate with the student's mental rather than chronological age, complement the student's interest, and/or satisfy the quest for advanced or complex information.

Example: Using accelerated concepts

Junior high school topic: Planets

Regular curriculum activity: Making a report on one of the planets

Differentiated activity for the gifted: Investigating the concept of a tenth planet through an analysis of current findings in scientific journals

2.3 Differentiated content is achieved *horizontally* by providing learning experiences that require assimilation of principles, theories, and concepts associated with knowledge held by the professional or expert.

Example: Using the concept of horizontal enrichment

Elementary school topic: Fairy Tales

Regular curriculum activity: Identifying different characters of fairy tales—heroine, villain, etc.

Differentiated activity for the gifted: Comparing fairy tales from different countries; evaluating the effects of magic on fairy tales; redesigning a fairy tale for a different country or area

2.4 Differentiated content is achieved by relating what is learned in one area of study to other areas and by crossing the boundaries of different disciplines to promote the application and transfer of learning.

Example: ***Using an interdisciplinary approach***

High school topic: Classical music of the 19th century

Regular curriculum activity: Study of several classical works and composers

Differentiated activity for the gifted: Study of the relationship of classical music of the 19th century to the socio-political and scientific happenings of the time

Example: ***Using acquired information to learn new subject areas***

Applying information from the study of a famous contemporary person to a study of the psychology of human development

2.5 Differentiated content is achieved by using multi-level resources that are varied and that are beyond those reserved or designated for the regular curriculum.

Example: ***Using multi-level and varied resources***

Junior high school topic: People in the news

Regular curriculum activity: Study of famous people through the newspaper

Differentiated activity for the gifted: Study of a famous contemporary person by reading periodicals, interviewing, writing letters, and using primary sources (i.e., the person's work of art, writing, etc.)

2.6 Differentiated content is achieved by allowing and further encouraging students' election of certain elements of the content.

Example: ***Using broad themes to allow for individual interests, needs, and abilities***

Intensive and/or extensive independent study on self-selected topics in such areas as ecology, communication, energy, economics, and the arts

2.7 Processes for gifted students stress creativity and higher level cognitive and affective skills.

PRINCIPLE III: Curriculum for the gifted/talented includes the elaboration of products to insure differentiation.

Criteria

3.1 Student products provide evidence of the differentiated content and processes that have been acquired.

3.2 Students investigate real problems and produce appropriate products.

> **Real-problem productivity...focuses on the identification and delimitation of problems that are similar in nature to those pursued by authentic researchers or artists in particular areas of study. Thus, activities...should reflect the student's emulation of the professional investigator to such a degree that the student actually becomes a professional himself or herself (Renzulli, 1977, p. 31).**

3.3 The products developed by students are audience-targeted.

> **...creative and productive persons are highly product-oriented and, furthermore, there are very few occasions when such persons engage in creative work without an appropriate audience in mind. Indeed, one of the major characteristics of a real problem (as opposed to a training exercise or presented problem) is that the producer is attempting to inform, to entertain, or to influence a relatively specific but nevertheless real audience...the step which is a natural consequence of real-world productivity is communication of results to appropriate audiences (Renzulli, p. 50).**

3.4 Students are introduced to new experiences and resources not ordinarily provided in the regular curriculum for use in product development.

> **Many students (especially young students) have simply not experienced a wide variety of ways in which one can be creative in particular fields. Teachers need to plan for and provide greater exposure to the creative/productive endeavors of people...We can facilitate the exploratory process by organizing a wide variety of "new exposure" experiences...(Renzulli, p. 45).**

3.5 Students are encouraged to progress toward the development of complex products.

> **...the history of human achievement is...characterized by the purposeful and conscientious effort of highly dedicated persons who have struggled with very real and important problems. Not all persons can or want to engage in such activity, and, in fact, only a few individuals derive satisfaction and feelings of accomplishment from such intensive endeavors...advanced levels of inquiry are likely to be pursued only by students who possess the traits that approximate those of eminent creators (Renzulli, p. 38).**

3.6 Students are encouraged to select the types of products they will produce through analysis of their needs and interests.

> Learning activities should provide options for individual differences in need, preferences, and capabilities. Example: Compare the parts of any insect to the parts of any vehicle by making a diagram or model. Note: The lack of specifications by which to compare the insect or vehicle and the type of materials to use allows for individual differences and selection (Kaplan, p. 112.).

PRINCIPLE IV: The learning setting and resources for gifted/talented students support the curriculum and do not in themselves constitute the curriculum.

Criteria

4.1 Learning resources such as materials, facilities, scheduling, and staff are consistent with the program goals and student objectives.

4.2 Curriculum materials and resources are differentiated either in use or kind from those used in the regular curriculum.

4.3 Staff are selected and trained to develop and implement differentiated curriculum.

4.4 Learning resources used are both cost effective and value effective.

4.5 The learning resources promote greater student responsibility and, therefore, greater proficiency in self-directed learning.

4.6 Guidelines for evaluation of materials and resources for the gifted are established and used in selecting those appropriate for differentiated learning (see Appendix D).

Staff Development

The Texas Education Agency (1979) defines staff development as "a planned program of learning opportunities afforded staff members of school districts and related agencies for purposes of improving performance" (p. 5). As research in gifted/talented education is disseminated through planned staff development programs, theory is translated into practice by the individual educator and change is brought about in the total system.

The local district is in the unique position of being able to identify the individual needs of professional educators as well as the program needs for gifted/talented education in the district and to mesh these into a comprehensive plan for staff development. To support this system, the district can call on resources including the staffs of their own or other districts, the regional education service centers, colleges and universities, and the Texas Education Agency.

The need for staff development in gifted education in Texas schools cannot be overemphasized. Both professional literature and experience and observations of past and present practices indicate that in-depth staff development is extremely important for the following reasons:

- Program planning and implementation for gifted/talented students is a relatively new area of program development.
- Teacher preparation programs in gifted education at both the undergraduate and graduate levels of colleges and universities are very limited in number.
- There are no state certification requirements for teachers of the gifted.
- Preservice preparation of professional staff is usually a general introduction to education and rarely includes an introduction to the education of the gifted.
- Planning and implementing an instructional program for the gifted requires changes in attitudes, knowledge, and skills of school staff.

Education of the gifted/talented is not the exclusive domain of the specialist but results from the cooperative efforts of all professionals who come into contact with gifted students. If differentiated curriculum for the gifted is to be truly achieved, staff development is necessary for all members of a professional staff, including regular classroom and special teachers. Release time for all teachers is also necessary. As expertise is developed, teachers of the gifted can be used to train other staff members in the district.

Staff development in gifted/talented education emphasizes acquisition of new knowledge about the following:

- human growth and development as related to the gifted
- learning styles of the gifted
- learning theories and models appropriate for the gifted
- acquisition of new teaching skills and strategies
- production of new and differentiated curriculum and instructional materials
- appropriate content and strategies for subject matter areas
- guidance and counseling of the gifted
- evaluation of student progress
- other aspects of gifted education.

Action Steps for Staff Development

Checklist

		Phase
_____ 1.	Review state plan and guidelines, district's long-range plan for the education of the gifted/talented, and the district's philosophy of staff development.	I
_____ 2.	Survey and determine district's strengths and weaknesses in gifted/talented education through needs assessment.	I
_____ 3.	Budget necessary time and finances for staff development.	I
_____ 4.	Develop professional library.	I
_____ 5.	Conduct awareness sessions for all staff concerning the definition and characteristics of gifted/talented students and the need for the program.	I
_____ 6.	Determine appropriate teacher characteristics and procedures for selection of the staff.	I
_____ 7.	Select teachers for gifted/talented program (see Appendix G).	I
_____ 8.	Provide time and resources for teachers of the gifted to attend workshops, conferences, and seminars on gifted education and for in-depth staff development on differentiation of curriculum.	II
_____ 9.	Conduct session with entire staff on goals and objectives of the program and on the identification process to include nominations, teacher checklists and rating scales, and notification of final selection.	II
_____ 10.	Encourage staff to provide information, ideas, and expertise for program improvement.	II
_____ 11.	Involve staff in evaluation of program and student objectives.	II
_____ 12.	Evaluate success of staff development.	III
_____ 13.	Expand and refine training of staff.	III
_____ 14.	Provide in-depth staff development for new staff.	III

Principles and Criteria of Staff Development

PRINCIPLE I: The effectiveness of the staff development program in gifted/talented education depends upon the amount of support and quality of leadership given by the administrative and supervisory staff of the district.

Criteria

1.1 The need for on-going, in-depth staff development in the area of gifted/talented education is recognized.

1.2 The psychology of change and the strategies for bringing about change are understood and a climate conducive to acceptance of change and growth is created.

1.3 Those staff members responsible for identifying needs, setting goals, and evaluating results of the staff development program are involved in the planning.

1.4 Both time and money specifically for staff development in gifted/talented education are provided.

PRINCIPLE II: Staff development is planned on the basis of data from ongoing needs assessment in the area of gifted/talented education.

Criteria

2.1 The effectiveness of present instructional programs for gifted students is determined.

2.2 The district's philosophy, goals, and objectives of education relating to differentiated programming for the gifted are examined.

2.3 A list of teacher characteristics and competencies is developed to be used in needs assessment for staff development (see Appendices E and G).

2.4 Target audiences for staff development are expanded to include parents, community members, and others involved in program implementation.

PRINCIPLE III: Objectives of staff development with appropriate activities for achieving them are outlined and written in clear and specific terms.

Criteria

3.1 Staff of the gifted/talented program are involved in planning and conducting the activities.

3.2 A plan of action for staff development is developed that includes the objectives, activities, roles represented, responsibilities, projected completion dates, and activity outcomes (see Appendix F).

3.3 Objectives are based on needs assessment data.

3.4 A variety of activities, adapted to the individual needs of participants, is used to accomplish objectives.

3.5 Timing and sequence of activities are given careful consideration.

3.6 Available resources are used effectively in planning and implementing activities to meet the objectives.

3.7 Follow-up strategies and activities are carefully planned and implemented.

3.8 Evaluation of the staff development activities is ongoing, and evaluation data are used in making decisions regarding changes in planning and implementation.

Parental/Community Involvement

Involvement of parents and community members in the implementation of gifted/talented programs is a key factor in their maintenance and growth. Efforts must be made to explain both what the program is and how it differs from other district programs. If it is to be successful, parents must be viewed as partners in the education of their children and should receive detailed information regarding objectives and activities that can support the school process. Community support is equally important because, once informed of program needs and objectives, community members can offer assistance that contributes to the program's success.

Ongoing communication with parents and community members is essential. It can be accomplished through regularly scheduled meetings, seminars, and conferences. News releases, bulletins, newsletters, and displays are also effective, as are exhibits of student products. Program visitations are perhaps the most successful method of gaining enthusiastic community support.

Community involvement includes participation of parents and community members in planning committees and in activities during program implementation. Often, colleges and universities can be relied upon for assistance. In most instances, community members and university personnel gladly offer their time and facilities for mentorships or seminar classes if they are apprised of a school district's need.

Parental and community support can be more effective when channeled through a formal organization and/or advisory councils. Where possible, schools should encourage and work with such groups who can offer support to both school personnel and parents by furnishing insight into the problems, needs, and abilities of gifted students.

Action Steps for Parental/Community Involvement

Checklist

		Phase
_____ 1.	Include parents and interested community members on gifted/talented planning committee.	I
_____ 2.	Provide an overview of the program to parents and community.	I
_____ 3.	Provide information on identification criteria and solicit nominations from parents and community.	II
_____ 4.	Conduct an orientation session for parents of students selected for the program.	II
_____ 5.	Distribute community resource survey and develop file on community resources and available mentors for the gifted.	II
_____ 6.	Invite parents and community members to visit the program and inform them of the students' products and accomplishments and of the growth of the program.	II
_____ 7.	Inform parents of their children's progress in the program through newsletters, meetings, conferences, etc.	II
_____ 8.	Attend sessions of parental/community organizations supportive of gifted/talented education.	II
_____ 9.	Encourage parents and community persons to keep school board members and legislators informed of the program's progress.	II
_____ 10.	Evaluate parental/community involvement in the program.	III

Principles and Criteria for Parental/Community Involvement

PRINCIPLE I: Parents and community members are involved in the development and implementation of the gifted/talented program.

Criteria

1.1 Awareness level activities such as news releases, brochures, and meetings are planned to inform parents and community about the education of gifted students in order to develop a broad base of support.

1.2 Suggestions from parents and community members are actively sought in the planning and implementation stages of program development.

1.3 Parents and community representatives are included on the planning committee.

1.4 Parents and community members are encouraged to nominate students for the program.

1.5 Products and achievements of gifted students are shared with the community, and visits to the program are encouraged.

1.6 Parents and community members are kept informed of the needs of district in relation to the program and of conditions and legislation that affect the education of gifted students.

1.7 Activities involving parents and community are assessed periodically in order to determine both the degree and effectiveness of communication and involvement.

PRINCIPLE II: Parents of gifted/talented students receive information on program development, on their children's progress, and on ways they can contribute to the program.

Criteria

2.1 Parents receive information on the nature and characteristics of gifted students and other facets of gifted education.

2.2 Parents receive information on ways they can assist the school district in implementing the program.

2.3 Group meetings and individual conferences provide the opportunity for parents to discuss their children's abilities, needs, and progress and ways they may assist the school in strengthening those abilities both at school and at home.

2.4 Parents are encouraged to organize or join a group that shares information and supports gifted/talented education (see Appendix H).

2.5 Parents have the opportunity to evaluate both the program's effectiveness and their children's progress.

PRINCIPLE III: Ways are explored in which the community can contribute to the gifted/talented program.

Criteria

3.1 **Liaison with community organizations is established and the use of community resources (retired community, foundations, universities, etc.) is investigated.**

3.2 **A data bank of community resources is compiled for use by students, teachers, and parents.**

3.3 **Community volunteers are sought out and given special orientation in working with gifted students.**

Evaluation

The evaluation design reveals to what extent the goals and objectives of the gifted/talented program are being accomplished. It focuses on two major areas: student outcomes as indicated in the student objectives and program administration as indicated in the program's process objectives. Evaluation procedures are comprehensive and ongoing and are developed by persons involved in program planning and implementation.

Since it will not be necessary to evaluate all aspects of the program each year, part of evaluation planning includes a determination of which features will be evaluated. Because the relationship of gifted/talented programs to the total education program of the school or district is so important, the attitudes and ideas of parents and community members, as well as students and school personnel, should be included as part of the evaluation procedures.

Evaluation results provide the basis for recommendations for future program directions. Modifications in the program design inevitably will be needed and should not be viewed as indications of failure but rather as necessary to assure program strength and growth. Evaluation information should be available to persons involved in developing and implementing the program as well as board members, parents, and other interested members of the community.

Action Steps for Evaluation

Checklist

		Phase
_____	1. Select person(s) to develop the evaluation design, oversee evaluation of program and student objectives, and produce the evaluation report.	I
_____	2. Review state plan and guidelines, current research and literature on evaluation, and the district's gifted/talented program plan.	I
_____	3. Select and develop instruments and methods to be used in evaluation.	I
_____	4. Conduct staff development regarding use of evaluation instruments.	II
_____	5. Evaluate the program (i.e, achievement of program and student objectives) by surveying teachers, students, administrators, other school staff, parents and community members. Key elements to be evaluated are:	II
	• identification procedures	
	• program organization	
	• curriculum development and student objectives	
	• staff development	
	• parental/community involvement	
	• evaluation procedures	
	• pupil progress.	
_____	6. Compile, analyze, and report evaluation findings and recommendations to appropriate groups, agencies, and individuals.	II
_____	7. Refine and expand program plan on the basis of evaluation results.	III
_____	8. Determine effectiveness of evaluation instruments and change them if necessary.	III
_____	9. Determine what components of the program need to be evaluated during the next year.	III

Principles and Criteria of Evaluation

PRINCIPLE I: Evaluation of the gifted/talented program is both continuous and comprehensive.

Criteria

1.1 Evaluation procedures are considered in the planning stages of the program.

1.2 Participants in the development and implementation of the program are involved in the ongoing evaluation process.

1.3 The evaluation design provides a continuous flow of information on selected facets of the program and measures their effectiveness in relation to student growth.

1.4 All elements of the program are evaluated periodically.

1.5 Evaluation data are disseminated to those persons involved in program development and implementation (teachers, counselors, administrators, students, local board, parents, and community).

PRINCIPLE II: Evaluation of the gifted/talented program measures student progress and performance.

Criteria

2.1 Student goals are clearly stated prior to program implementation.

2.2 Student objectives and activities are formulated to meet student goals.

2.3 Evaluation activities are appropriate for measuring student outcomes.

2.4 Self-evaluation by students is encouraged and used in determining student progress.

2.5 Documentation that measures outcomes may include the following:

- student and parent interviews or questionnaires
- teacher observations
- peer evaluations
- observations of student behavior
- attitude checklists
- sociograms
- student products
- community interviews or questionnaires
- comments or statements from mentors or experts in the area of student talent
- criterion-referenced tests
- standardized tests.

2.6 Conclusions addressing both strengths and weaknesses are drawn from collected data.

2.7 Recommendations on student placement, progress, and performance are formulated and disseminated as appropriate.

PRINCIPLE III: Evaluation of the gifted/talented program determines the effectivenss of program administration.

Criteria

3.1 Program (process) objectives, with activities, are clearly stated and address each of the following components of the program:

- identification
- program organization
- curriculum
- staff development
- parental/community involvement
- evaluation.

3.2 Program activities are formulated for each objective.

3.3 Evaluation activities are appropriate for measuring the program (process) objectives.

3.4 Documentation that determines the accomplishment of the program (process) objectives includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- dates of staff orientation meetings, number and names of personnel attending, topics covered, interests expressed, and other records/minutes/agenda of orientation meetings
- records of staff development sessions and evaluation results
- effectiveness of materials/supplies/equipment purchased
- lists of key program activities with dates of accomplishment
- measurement of changes in perception of program by staff, students, parents, and community.

3.5 Conclusions addressing the strengths and weaknesses of program objectives are analyzed from collected data and disseminated as appropriate.

3.6 Recommendations for improvement of the program based on evaluation results are formulated and disseminated as appropriate.

Appendices

Appendix A

The Identification Process

Phase I: *Planning the Identification Process.* Some critical decisions should be made prior to implementing the identification process. In some situations, certain decisions may be delayed because of restrictions beyond the control of school personnel; to as great a degree as possible, however, the critical areas outlined below should be dealt with prior to the identification of students.

1. How and by whom selection decisions will be made (the composition and operating procedures for the screening/selection committees).
2. Written procedural plan for identification, including a sequence of activities to be undertaken to implement the identification process.
3. Area(s) of giftedness for which students will be selected.
4. Program goals.
5. Content area(s) that will be the focus of the program.
6. Grade level(s) served by the program.
7. The teacher(s) who will plan the curriculum and guide students' development.
8. How parents and students will be involved in the identification process.
9. What provisions will be made for handling transfer students who qualify for the program and for handling errors in identification.
10. Needed identification resources and their costs.
11. Active support and involvement of the following groups: board of trustees, administrators, faculty, parents, community members, and students.

Phase II: *Screening.* The screening phase consists of two distinct stages of activity. The first stage is gathering a talent pool through population assessment and nomination, and the second is compiling and processing student information. In this and later phases of the identification process, both objective and subjective standards are used in considering students for the program.

A pool of students to be considered may be obtained from both past performances and nominations. The purpose of compiling a talent pool is to consider any student who might benefit from the program that is being planned. The following examples indicate various means for including students in the talent pool.

1. Consider all students who score above some specific score on a standardized achievement test and/or on a test of general ability, such as a group-administered IQ or aptitude test. Exact cut-off scores will vary with the kind of giftedness being identified and the kind of program being offered. Choice of tests or subtests to consider should be consistent with the areas of giftedness for which the program is designed.
2. Consider students whose grades in subjects related to or prerequisite for the program being offered indicate high performance or interest in the subject matter.

3. Consider students whose creativity or outstanding products in program-related areas indicate high potential or interest in the gifted/talented program.

4. Consider students of various ethnic groups in the school population. Methods to insure that culturally different and economically disadvantaged students are placed in the talent pool should be examined and used.

5. Consider students whose handicaps should not preclude their participation in the program, but for whom special assessment may be needed.

Nominations may be obtained from any person familiar with the student's abilities, potential, performance, and/or past records. Because the support of teachers and parents is critical to the success and acceptance of any gifted/talented program, it is strongly recommended that they be asked to submit nominations. Depending upon the area of giftedness and the performance area for which students are nominated, the following people may be surveyed to obtain nominations:

TEACHERS who have, or have had, the student in class.

PARENTS, both to nominate their own children and others they know.

STUDENTS, both to nominate themselves and their peers.

PSYCHOLOGISTS AND COUNSELORS who have had close personal contact with, and knowledge of, the student.

LIBRARIANS who have had close personal contact with, and knowledge of, the student.

ADMINISTRATORS who have had close personal contact with, and knowledge of, the student.

OTHER PERSONS who may have relevant data to contribute on a particular student.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS who may serve to nominate students on the basis of personal knowledge of their abilities and interests and to evaluate the students' product or performance (e.g., Boy Scout/Girl Scout leaders, 4-H leaders, etc.).

Activities during the screening process are coordinated by a committee. This committee may be composed of school administrators, teachers, and guidance personnel. While members may vary from district to district, such committees should have at least one teacher, one school administrator, and one counselor/psychologist as members.

One approach for committee work might be:

1. The committee, chaired by the district coordinator, compiles all available evidence on students in the talent pool and determines if additional information is needed to make selection decisions.

2. The committee compiles and organizes the data in a form that facilitates decision-making for selection of students.

Screening procedures must consider all students who might reasonably benefit from the specific program or service. In no way should the process discriminate, either by omission or commission, against any person or group for reasons of sex, race, creed, handicapping condition, ethnic origin, or religious preference. If psychological tests are to be administered, written consent must be obtained from parents first.

All information collected on students during the screening process should be in conformity with legal standards regarding the rights of privacy of the individual. A file for collecting screening data should be established for students in the talent pool and should be maintained by a professional educator who can assure confidentiality while making the information available to those who need to use it for educational purposes.

In order to facilitate selection decisions, districts may decide to use a matrix to organize, rate, and weigh student performance on selection criteria. Such matrices are usually developed around local score distributions on the various screening procedures.

Phase III: ***Selection.*** The selection process is characterized by consideration of each student in the talent pool by a committee of professionally qualified persons. This selection committee may be composed of persons who have served on the screening committee. However, it is recommended that, in the interest of fairness, neither parents nor community leaders be included in final selection decisions unless they are also school district personnel and students are identified by number rather than by name.

Two kinds of information should be considered for each student in the final selection process: (1) the student's need for the educational experiences planned for the program or service being offered; (2) the degree to which the student, in the opinion of the selection committee, will benefit from the program or service being offered.

Appendix B

Suggested Criteria for Selection of Students for Exemplary Programs for the Gifted/Talented

For exemplary programs for gifted/talented students, the following are suggested as optimal criteria:

General Intellectual Ability

1. Individually administered abilities test scores. If group abilities test scores are used, they should not be weighed as heavily as other criteria in the identification process.
2. Achievement test scores. A student should score at the 95 percentile on one or more sub-tests.
3. Teacher ratings. Checklists related specifically to general intellectual ability.
4. Parent input. Specific checklists and/or interviews.
5. Peer input.
6. Student input. Interviews and/or pupil inventories.
7. Review of student's products or performance by experts.
8. Grade point average in academic subjects for the past three years.
9. Other group abilities test information.

Specific Subject Matter Aptitude

Same as above, except:

1. Sub-test scores of abilities tests.
2. Individual subject matter grades for previous years.
3. Student products or performance in specific area.
4. Specific subject matter achievement test scores.

Creative and Productive Thinking Ability

1. Tests of creativity.
2. Teacher input. Checklists relating specifically to creativity or productive thinking.
3. Parent input. Specific checklists and/or interviews.
4. Peer input. Specific checklists.
5. Review of student's product(s) and/or performance(s) by experts.
6. Locally constructed activity showing abilities in creative/productive thinking (fluency, flexibility, originality, elaboration).
7. Community input.
8. Personality assessments.

Leadership Ability

1. Teacher input. Checklists relating specifically to leadership.
2. Parent input. Specific checklists; interviews dealing with creative problem solving, decision making skills, communication skills, working under pressure, high sense of moral responsibility.
3. Peer input. Specific checklists.
4. Student input. Interviews dealing with same items as parent interviews or pupil inventories.
5. Community recommendations. From a source where a student has shown leadership potential or performance, asking person recommending to complete a checklist on leadership.
6. Creation of an atmosphere or situation where leadership will emerge.
7. Situational testing.
8. Sociometric instruments.
9. Leadership inventories.
10. Personality assessments.

Ability in the Visual and Performing Arts

1. Auditions.
2. Teacher input. Specific checklists.
3. Parent input. Specific checklists.
4. Student input. Specific checklists.
5. Review of student's product(s) and/or performance(s) by experts.
6. Standardized tests of creative and divergent thinking.
7. Locally constructed tests of specific skills and abilities in the visual and performing arts.
8. Standardized tests of specific skills and abilities.

Psychomotor Ability

1. Auditions and tryouts.
2. Teacher input. Specific checklists.
3. Parent input. Specific checklists.
4. Student input. Specific checklists.
5. Review of student's product(s) and/or performance(s) by experts.
6. Locally constructed tests of specific psychomotor skills and abilities.
7. Standardized tests of specific psychomotor skills and abilities.

Appendix C

Principles of a Differentiated Curriculum for the Gifted/Talented

The Curriculum Council
National/State Leadership Training Institute
On the Gifted and the Talented, 1979

1. Present content that is related to broad-based issues, themes, or problems.
2. Integrate multiple disciplines into the area of study.
3. Present comprehensive, related, and mutually reinforcing experiences within the area of study.
4. Allow for the in-depth learning of a self-selected topic within the area of study.
5. Develop independent or self-directed study skills.
6. Develop productive, complex, abstract, and/or higher level thinking skills.
7. Integrate basic skills and higher level thinking skills into the curriculum.
8. Encourage the development of products that challenge existing ideas and produce "new" ideas.
9. Encourage the development of products that use new techniques, materials, and forms.
10. Encourage the development of self-understanding, i.e., recognizing and using one's abilities, becoming self-directed, appreciating likenesses and differences between oneself and others.
11. Evaluate student outcomes by using appropriate and specific criteria through self-appraisal, criterion-referenced and/or standardized instruments.

Appendix D

Criteria for the Selection of Materials for the Gifted/Talented

1. Supports goals/objectives of the program.
   a. Contributes to total educational experience of child.
   b. Justifies cost in terms of achievement.
2. Provides outstanding suggestions and guides for teachers.
   a. Serves as resource for basic background in specific content area.
   b. Suggests a variety of ways material may be used in the learning process.
3. Contains a variety of ways in which students can use materials effectively on their own.
   a. Minimizes teacher's role.
   b. Provides students with multiple learning sources.
4. Offers opportunities for exploration.
   a. Examines various alternatives in a given area.
   b. Stimulates interest and piques curiosity.
   c. Motivates students to further exploration.
5. Emphasizes interdisciplinary or multi-disciplinary approaches to learning.
   a. Bases content on basic skills and/or concepts.
   b. Focuses sometimes on universality of issues.
6. Fosters creative interaction between learner and material, learner and teacher, and/or learner and learner.
7. Allows open-ended learning experiences.
   a. Allows for multi-level learning experiences.
   b. Appeals to varied learning styles.
   c. Provides for differentiated learning alternatives.
   d. Stimulates and enhances the student's aesthetic appreciation.
8. Provides bridges for gifted/talented students to become producers as well as consumers.
   a. Helps student to identify processes for student production.
   b. Encourages use of processes in investigation of real problems.

Appendix E

Needs Assessment for Inservice in Gifted/Talented Education

Henrietta Grooms
Education Service Center Region VII

Please mark your need for inservice in the following areas.

	No Need 1	Low Need 2	Some Need 3	Strong Need 4	Critical Need 5
1. Knowledge of current theory and research in gifted/talented education.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Special needs and types of giftedness.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Development of a written plan.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Characteristics of gifted/talented.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Procedures for identification.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Knowledge of program prototypes and program components.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Differentiated curricula for gifted/talented students.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Materials selection for gifted/talented students.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. Student involvement in program planning.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. Program coordination and supervision.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. Role of the regular classroom teacher.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. Providing for the intellectually gifted/talented student.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. Providing for the gifted/talented student in specific academic areas.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. Providing for the creatively gifted/talented student.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	No Need 1	Low Need 2	Some Need 3	Strong Need 4	Critical Need 5
15. Providing for leadership development for gifted/talented students.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
16. Programming for culturally different gifted/talented.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
17. The teacher as counselor for gifted/talented students.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
18. Self-concept and the gifted/talented.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
19. Student evaluation and performance; record keeping and reporting.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
20. Parent-family role and the gifted/talented.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
21. Utilizing community resources and supportive services.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
22. Effective teaching skills and competencies for teachers of gifted/talented students.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
23. Psychological needs and counseling of the gifted.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
24. Other.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Appendix F

Dimensions of Inservice Planning Model

Planning Stage	Identified Need	Level	Participant	Inservice Design	Strategies	Resources	Evaluation
1. Orientation 2. Investigation and Research 3. Program Planning and Development 4. Student Identification 5. Teacher Training 6. Program Implementation a. Initiation b. Update 7. Evaluation 8. Program Expansion	1. Knowledge of current theory and research in G/T education 2. Special needs and types of giftedness 3. Development of a written plan 4. Characteristics of G/T and procedures for identification 5. Knowledge of program prototypes and program components 6. Differentiated curricula for G/T students 7. Materials selection for G/T students 8. Enrichment and acceleration for the gifted 9. Student involvement in program planning 10. Program coordination and supervision 11. Role of the regular classroom teacher 12. Providing for the intellectually G/T student 13. Providing for the G/T student in academic areas 14. Providing for the creatively G/T student 15. Providing for leadership development for G/T students 16. Programming for culturally different G/T 17. The teacher as counselor for G/T students 18. Self-concept and the G/T 19. Student evaluation and performance; record keeping and reporting 20. Parent-family role and the G/T 21. Utilizing community resources and supportive services 22. Effective teaching skills and competencies 23. Other	1. Awareness 2. Skill Development 3. Production 4. Dissemination 5. Updating	1. Teacher 2. Administrators 3. Counselor 4. Support staff 5. Librarians 6. Aides 7. Mentors 8. Parents 9. Boards of education 10. College and university staffs	1. National, state or regional conferences 2. EBC workshops 3. Multi-system workshops 4. Systemwide workshops: — Faculty meetings — Saturday sessions — Release time — Summer workshops — Graduate level coursework — ETV courses — Mini-internship — Preschool 5. Individual school level 6. Independent study 7. Visitation (inter and intra-system)	1. Lecture 2. Dialogue session 3. Program observation 4. Simulation 5. Role playing 6. Demonstration teaching 7. Conducting research 8. Brainstorming 9. Decision-making 10. Small or large group sessions 11. Unit plan design or curriculum development 12. Review of case studies 13. Displays 14. Seminars 15. Task force development 16. Creativity development 17. Problem solving 18. Laboratory work 19. Critique of teaching strategies 20. Audio-visual production	1. Consultants 2. Video tapes 3. Film 4. Inservice kits 5. CITE library 6. Records or tapes 7. Model programs 8. Professional publications 9. Slide/tape presentations 10. Teachers of gifted 11. Sample unit plans 12. Gifted students 13. State guidelines for gifted education 14. Sample identification forms and procedures 15. Learning theory models 16. Professional organizations 17. EBC 18. State department of education 19. Museums 20. Community resource people 21. Sample evaluation forms 22. Video tape equipment	1. Questionnaire 2. Observation checklists 3. Personal interviews 4. Rating form 5. Oral critique 6. Inventories 7. Follow-up observation of teachers 8. Product completion

Adapted from *Guidelines for In-Service Education: Gifted and Talented* published by the Georgia Department of Education, 1978.

Example

Planning Stage	Identified Need	Level	Participants	Inservice Design	Strategies	Resources	Evaluation
1. Orientation	Needs of the G/T	Awareness	Administrators Teachers	Release time workshop April 18	1. Lecture 2. Interaction session 3. Decision-making	1. State Department of Education 2. Film (specify) 3. State guidelines for gifted education	Oral evaluation and critique
2. Identification	Screening and selection of students	Skill development	Administrators Teachers Counselors	Saturday workshop May 8	1. Simulation on identification 2. Interaction session 3. Case study examination 4. Decision-making	1. Simulation activity 2. Sample case studies, forms and procedures 3. Professional books	Questionnaire
3. Program Design	Teaching/learning theory models	Production	Teachers	Summer workshop July 13-15	1. Lecture 2. Demonstration teaching 3. Unit plan design and curriculum development	1. Teacher of gifted (another district) 2. Sample unit plans 3. Teaching/learning models 4. Instructional materials	Product completion

DATE	TIME
1. April 8	1:00-3:00
2. May 8	9:00-12:00 noon
3. July 13-15	9:00-3:00 each day

TASK ASSIGNMENTS (Personnel)

Coordinator of instruction will plan inservice session, providing for proper selection and notification of participants.

ESC curriculum and instruction consultant for G/T will plan inservice sessions and notify participants.

Appendix G

Characteristics of Teachers of the Gifted/Talented

Special skills and attributes are required of teachers who work with gifted/talented students. The development of special skills is an essential element of any program, but teachers selected for the gifted/talented program should possess certain abilities and characteristics as a basis for further professional growth. While all of the characteristics listed below will not be found in every teacher, certain combinations are necessary to work effectively with gifted students.

Relative to self, the teacher has:

- Personal confidence in ability to work with G/T students
- A natural sense of humor (as one measure of the ability to communicate effectively)
- Enthusiasm for learning and abundant energy
- Flexibility in rapidly adapting to a broad range of events and people
- Understanding of and ability to apply national, state, and local definitions of G/T students
- Knowledge of the characteristics of the gifted/talented and ability to apply this knowledge in identification and learning
- Ability to select, use, and interpret measurement instruments appropriate for G/T students
- Ability to evaluate progress of G/T students and to prepare meaningful reports on that progress to the students, to parents, to peers, and to others concerned
- Ability to maintain accurate records

Relative to students, the teacher can:

- Perceive and respond positively to individual differences
- Provide appropriate and differentiated activities based on different learning styles
- Encourage independent and divergent thinking, risk-taking, exploration of controversial issues, and the scientific approach to problem solving
- Respond to student's intellectual challenges without promoting isolation from other experiences and students
- Develop student talent in areas not familiar to the teacher
- Clarify classroom and learning objectives

Relative to other people, the teacher is:

- Sensitive to the perceptions and feelings of others
- Able to work well with other people
- Able to explain the G/T program in ways that promote community and peer understanding and support

Relative to the learning environment, the teacher can:

- Apply the concepts of a differentiated curriculum, such as the development of higher cognitive processes and open-ended learning experiences
- Evaluate and select instructional materials appropriate for G/T students
- Adapt commercial instructional materials creatively or develop new materials to meet the unique needs of the gifted/talented
- Identify and utilize community resources, such as people, field trip sites, real-life situations

Appendix H

Organizing a Local Association for the Gifted/Talented

Laura Allard and June Cox

The steps outlined below present a procedure for developing local support groups for the education of the gifted/talented. Such groups are essential to the continued success and expansion of appropriate education of gifted students throughout the State of Texas. Local organizations can offer invaluable assistance for district programs for the gifted/talented.

Phase One—Study

- Read, read, read. Review current research to determine recent developments in the field of G/T education.
- Invite a small group of parents and educators to form a steering committee.
- Meet in the administration building or in one of the local schools.
- Elect a temporary chairperson and a secretary/treasurer.
- Conduct a survey to determine specific concerns, focusing on why you want an association.
- Establish association goals and objectives as an advocacy group for G/T education.
- Take your time and get to know each other and thus establish good rapport among participants.
- Avoid allowing an adversary relationship between the school and the parents to develop.
- Discuss what is already happening in your schools for G/T.
- Investigate other schools' programs.
- Visit other G/T associations, seeking information and direction. Ask to be put on their mailing lists to receive their newsletters with the understanding that your association will reciprocate.
- Study local association and Texas Association of Gifted/Talented (TAGT) by-laws.

Phase Two—Organize

- Develop your by-laws. Keep them simple and flexible.
- With legal assistance, incorporate as a nonprofit organization.
- Consider budget requirements in order to establish membership dues realistically. Main needs for funds will be to cover costs of printing, postage, and a bulk mailing permit. Later, funds for the president and/or other officers to travel to state meetings, etc., and for student/educator scholarships may be included.

- Elect officers/executive board. Additionally, larger communities may wish to elect a board of directors and an advisory council as well.

Phase Three—Action

- Establish a schedule of executive board meetings.
- Establish a schedule of membership meetings.
- Publish an association newsletter which will inform the membership on a regular basis of pertinent legislative activity, conferences, educational opportunities, research and literature related to G/T education.
- Develop a directory, including the association's membership, important addresses, and local, state, and national resources.
- Affiliate with the Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented (TAGT). See "Affiliate Membership Application" in TAGT membership flyer.
- Other appropriate action could include enrichment programs for children, the acquisition of resource materials concerning G/T education, and conferences devoted to the special needs of the gifted.

Dedicated educators want appropriate educational experiences for gifted students. Concerned parents support effective educational procedures and programs. Educators and parents working together can assure adequate funding which will support excellent programming for all the gifted/talented students in the State of Texas.

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Glossary

Area of Giftedness	the particular ability in which a child excels or has the potential to excel
Creative and Productive Thinking	possessing outstanding imagination, innovative or creative reasoning ability, ability in problem solving, and/or high attainment in original or creative thinking.
General Intellectual Ability	possessing superior intelligence, with potential or demonstrated achievement in several fields of study; ability to perform complex mental tasks
Leadership Ability	possessing the natural ability to influence others; possessing skills in interpersonal relationships, demonstrated, for an example, by superior ability in such activities as student government or in other non-academic areas
Specific Subject Matter Aptitude	possessing superior ability or potential in a specific course of study such as science, mathematics, language arts, etc.
Psychomotor Ability	possessing superior ability in either fine motor skills or athletic endeavors
Community Resources	any persons, sites, funds, materials, or events that can be used in a supplementary manner to enhance the opportunities of gifted/talented students
Curriculum	an organization of learning/teaching activities designed to attain specific student objectives
Differentiated Curriculum	modification of student goals, objectives, instructional strategies, and learning experiences to meet the needs and interests of gifted students
Exemplary Program	a program providing appropriate and differentiated activities to enhance students' abilities; a model program providing outstanding learning opportunities for gifted/talented students
Identification Matrix	a graph showing the abilities of a student in relation to the identification criteria for a program
Program Goals	statements related to student development that are expressed in global terms and indicate a long-range outcome that students are intended to attain
Program (Process) Objectives	measurable statements that indicate the direction and intent of program components such as identification, staff development, and evaluation

Program Prototype	administrative methods and procedures to organize the delivery of instructional strategies and learning experiences adapted to the unique needs and interests of gifted/talented students
Scope and Sequence	the range and order in which curriculum is developed and presented
Student Objectives	statements of measurable learner expectations around which the curriculum and associated activities are based; specific statements designed to measure student progress in attaining a goal; statements of expected student outcomes with specific performance criteria and measurement strategies.